

Aspects of Ancient Institutions and Geography

Studies in Honor of Richard J.A. Talbert

Edited by

Lee L. Brice and Daniëlle Slootjes



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

Contents

Acknowledgements	ix
List of Figures and Maps	x
List of Abbreviations	xii
Notes on Contributors	xiii

PART 1

Introduction

Chaps and Maps: Reflections on a Career with Institutional and Cartographic History	3
<i>Lee L. Brice and Daniëlle Slootjes</i>	

Cumulative Bibliography of Works by Richard J.A. Talbert	12
<i>Tom Elliott</i>	

PART 2

Roman Institutions

- 1 Plutarchan Prosopography: The *Cursus Honorum* 29
Philip A. Stadter
- 2 The *Lex Julia de Senatu Habendo*: A View from the 1930s 48
Jonathan Scott Perry
- 3 Tacitus on Trial(s) 65
Leanne Bablitz
- 4 Curial Communiqué: Memory, Propaganda, and the Roman Senate House 84
Sarah E. Bond
- 5 Second Chance for Valor: Restoration of Order After Mutinies and Indiscipline 103
Lee L. Brice

- 6 **Training Gladiators: Life in the *Ludus*** 122
Garrett G. Fagan
- 7 **Statuenehrungen als Zeugnis für den Einfluss römischer Amtsträger
im Leben einer Provinz** 145
Werner Eck
- 8 **Dio Chrysostom as a Local Politician: A Critical Reappraisal** 161
Christopher J. Fuhrmann
- 9 **Late Antique Administrative Structures: On the Meaning of Dioceses
and their Borders in the Fourth Century AD** 177
Daniëlle Slootjes

PART 3

Geography and Cartographic History

- 10 **The Geography of Thucydides** 199
Cheryl L. Golden
- 11 **An Anatolian Itinerary, 334–333 BC** 216
Fred S. Naiden
- 12 **Visualizing Empire in Imperial Rome** 235
Mary T. Boatwright
- 13 **The Provinces and Worldview of Velleius Paterculus** 260
Brian Turner
- 14 ***Litterae Datae Blandenone*: A Letter in Search of a Posting
Address** 280
Jerzy Linderski
- 15 **Using Sundials** 298
George W. Houston

- 16 **The Healing Springs of Latium and Etruria** 314
John F. Donahue
- 17 **The Shaping Hand of the Environment: Three Phases of Development
in Classical Antiquity** 333
Michael Maas
- Geographic Index** 347
- General Index** 349

Curial Communiqué: Memory, Propaganda, and the Roman Senate House

Sarah E. Bond

Italy's Fascist dictator, Benito Mussolini, held a lavish and highly anticipated ceremony within the renovated Curia Julia on May 1, 1939. The calculated service was itself reminiscent of Octavian's dedicatory festival almost two millennia earlier, when in 29 BC, the young and newly victorious leader of the Roman world used the completion of the Curia Julia to advertise his perceived role as restorer of the Republic.¹ Mussolini's communication of his role as a *restitutor* was also transmitted visually, through his vast rebuilding projects. Intent on reviving the classical glory of Rome, Mussolini in fact exposed many of the ancient ruins of the city by destroying medieval, early modern, and Christian edifices; often publicly delivering the first thrust of the pickaxe before a demolition project began.² Within his restoration plan, there appears a special focus on the Roman senate house. Its renovation had required that the architectural layers, which had built upon and transformed the Curia Julia since the structure's rebuilding under Diocletian, be peeled away. As with many of the dictator's projects within the city of Rome, such as the display of the *Ara Pacis*, the restoration both installed an aesthetic association between him and the emperor Augustus and would further articulate the relationship between Mussolini and the Italian senate. As these two leaders demonstrate, the restoration and decoration of the senate house was itself a power move; it conjured legitimacy, could function as a link between the new ruler and the previous administration, and asserted his relationship with the senate. As it will be explored, the notable histories of the Roman senate houses, the Curia Hostilia, the Curia Cornelia, and, in particular, the Curia Julia, speak to the pivotal position of the

1 Octavian's 'restoration' would not be formally recognized until 27 BC, when the senate granted him the title of 'Augustus' (RG 34; Cf. Ov. *Fast.* 1.589). An alternate view suggests that the senate house was never dedicated in the strict sense of the word, due to the inherent nature of the senate, see Simpson (1998).

2 Baxa (2010) 54–75, especially 59, "Mussolini's pickaxe became iconic of fascism's reworking of the Roman landscape, but equally important was the relentless pace of work."

structure as an intercessor in Roman society.³ Furthermore, an examination of the intercessory nature of this temple can facilitate a better understanding of its preservation in the seventh century, when the papacy drew on the renown of the Curia in order to establish a sacred site (S. Adriano) that would continue to function as a liturgical focal point and a victory monument.⁴

While a simple litany of the decorations, modifications, and renovations of Rome's primary senate house is informative, it can overlook the explicit ways in which others—Mussolini, Sulla, Julius Caesar, Theodoric, etc.—manipulated the Curia for their own purposes. This analysis of the Curia's modifications will instead translate the visual messages articulated by various patrons and consider the broader meaning that different restorations of the senate house came to signify. In this article, I look beyond the previous accounts of Rome's early senate houses and the Curia Julia, which have tended to focus on the archaeological components of the structure, in order to expose a more complex role within a broader topography of power.⁵ Likewise, I will illustrate the fact that, unlike other *curiae*, the Curia Julia was potent not only in antiquity, but remained a locus of political and religious authority into the middle ages. Even after the administrative shifts to cities such as Constantinople and Ravenna in Late Antiquity, and long after the purported "fall" of the Roman Empire, the site of the Curia continued to exert a recognized power. It is this power which Pope Honorius perhaps attempted to harness in c. 630 by consecrating the space as the church of S. Adriano (*Liber Pontificalis* [Duchesne] 72.6; 324). Like the rulers that built and rebuilt the Curia during the Empire, the Church further communicated the victory of Christianity in Rome and within the Empire by transforming the space into a site that was vital to the "liturgical life" of the city. As it has been noted, the Curia also stood at a strategic position at the intersection of the Via Argiletum and the Via Sacra in the Forum Romanum.⁶ Despite its Christian re-contextualization, the site continued to be recognized as the Roman senate house and sought out by travellers and locals alike, with its architectural elements taking on an almost relic-like nature up until the time of Mussolini.

I approach this curial biography chronologically from the purported consecration of the Roman senate house in the seventh century BC to the seventh century AD, concentrating on the building itself, the addition or removal of

3 Thompson (1981); Talbert (1984) 187.

4 Kalas (1999) 258.

5 Von Reber (1858); Mommsen (1864); Lanciani (1963); Morselli and Tortorici (1989); Richardson (1992) 103–104; Grant (1970) 118–25; Coarelli (1985).

6 See Kalas (1999) 262.

significant monuments in and around the Curia Julia, and focusing on periods of restoration that have been underexplored, as in the restoration under the “barbarian” Ostrogothic king Theodoric. I argue that in Roman antiquity, these monuments frequently articulated, anchored, and solidified complex relationships between the emperor and the senate. In the case of the Statue of Victory, which had been housed in the Curia Julia for four centuries prior to Gratian’s removal of the altar in 382, this relationship went beyond the tension between paganism and Christianity. Consequently, its removal signified a reconfiguring of the relationship between the emperor and the senatorial aristocracy, rather than a battle between pagan and Christian senators.⁷ The history of the Curia Julia thus provides a prism through which to review struggles within the Empire: imperial attempts at legitimacy, the rapport between the senate and the emperor, and the rise of the papacy. The Curia Julia was itself a historical player worthy of note; one often manipulated to communicate the intentions and crafted memory of others.

The Republican Senate House

On the Northern side of the Comitium in the Roman Forum, aligned with the cardinal directions, stood the original Roman senate house. Myth held that the seventh century king of the city, Tullus Hostilius, erected and consecrated the structure, and thus his name would live on in the Curia Hostilia (Livy 1.30, 22.55.1; Varro, *Ling.* 5.155).⁸ Although the building likely underwent some degree of modification (for instance, after the sack and pillaging of Rome by the Gauls in 386), the sources do not indicate extensive renovations before the first century BC. In a highly emblematic move, Sulla demolished the old senate house around 80 and enlarged it—though, as the character of Marcus Piso remarks in Cicero’s *De Finibus*, expanding the Curia’s size did not necessarily made others think of it as grander structure, “Even when I saw our senate house—the Curia Hostilia I speak of, not the new one, which seems to me lesser since it has become greater” (Cic. *Fin.* 5.2).⁹ Ostensibly, the project was meant to provide adequate accommodation for the expanded senate; however, the reconstruction was a considerably more aggressive move on Sulla’s part

7 Cameron (2010) 56.

8 *LTUR* 1.331–2, s.v. “Curia Hostilia,” (Coarelli).

9 *Equidem etiam curiam nostram—Hostiliam dico, non hanc novam, quae minor mihi esse videtur, posteaquam est maior.* The treatise, written in 45, is attempting to evoke the period of 79, thereby referencing the Curia Cornelia.

than modern analysis has suggested. At its core, Sulla intended the act to visually communicate his modifications to the Roman constitution, the monopoly on power now held by the senate, and above all, to announce his ultimate triumph.¹⁰ Formerly, a king of Rome had been directly linked with the building, but Sulla's plans sought to install himself as the new patron associated directly with the senate house, and, in turn, the senate itself. The project disrupted previous Republican victory monuments in the vicinity; Sulla relocated statues of Alcibiades and Pythagoras that stood "on the horns of the Comitium" (Plin. *HN*. 34.26, *in cornibus comitii*). Pliny purports that these statues were erected under the direction of the Delphic oracle, so that Rome might be victorious in the Samnite War (Plin. *HN*. 34.26). The new senate house was, in many ways, Sulla's own victory monument, and it appears he would not have his visual message muddled by competing commemorations—much as his competitors had been banished by proscription.

In terms of the new senate house's name, there is reason to believe that this novel structure was called the Curia Cornelia. This circumstance is supported by the senate's later request to Sulla's little known son, Faustus, to take the reins in rebuilding the senate house after the fire of Clodius in 52 (Cic. *Mil.* 90; Plin. *HN*. 34.21).¹¹ Clearly, the senators wanted to give Sulla's son the right to defend his namesake, which he did, and enlarge the building further. Yet in 44, under a specious pretense of Lepidus wishing to build a Temple of Felicitas on the spot, the Cornelian senate house was torn down and Julius Caesar began plans to build a new Curia, this time with the name of his own *gens* attached to it, in the northwest corner of the Forum.¹² Dio indicates that Sulla's name was attached to the current senate house, and thus the "real purpose" of the new structure was so that Sulla's name would be kept from the Curia, and a new senate-house might bear the Julian name (Cass. Dio 44.5.2); an honor fit for the most potent man in Rome.

The deletion of the senate house of his predecessor went a long way toward removing the Cornelian name from popular usage and inserting the Julian *gens*, so that the Curia Cornelia became the Curia Julia on the lips of those in the Forum, the city, and increasingly, the Roman world at large. Caesar's intended *curia* was likely meant not only to outdo Sulla's as the principal meeting place of the senate, but perhaps also explicitly to eclipse Pompey's theater complex in Rome, which was itself a victory monument. The complex had an attached *curia* that adjoined the structure's porticus. Dedicated in 55, it has

10 Gisborne (2005) 120–1. Gisborne disputes Ramage (1991).

11 For the name of the Sullan-era senate house, see Flower (2010) 131.

12 Weigel (1992) 35–6.

been argued, that the complex was itself likely an attempt by Pompey to shift focus within the city to the Campus Martius, a move that would correspondingly decrease the import of the Forum.¹³ Pompey had already performed the significant gesture of rebuilding a senate house in respect to his restoration of the *bouleuterion* in Antioch. There he had gained acclaim during his campaign to “liberate” the East by repairing the original structure built by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and endowing it with paintings and a portico (Malalas 211).¹⁴ It is telling that Julius Caesar would later trump Pompey in Antioch as well: rebuilding the Pantheon, constructing the *Kaisareion*, and giving the city a theater and bathhouse (Malalas 216–217; 287). In Rome, Pompey’s theater complex had used the cardinal orientation common among Roman temples, thus highlighting Pompey’s piety and the structure’s ties with the jewel of the theater complex, the Temple of Venus Victrix—the goddess of military victory and the mother of Aeneas. In contrast to Pompey, Caesar seems to have planned to break the curial mold. The Curia Julia deviated from the traditional use of cardinal orientation, but did noticeably maintain a strong tie to the goddess Victory while serving to articulate the connection between the Roman Forum and Forum of Caesar.¹⁵ Caesar never saw the completion of his senate house, although one might argue that he eventually overshadowed Pompey’s *curia*. Indeed, the Curia Pompeia would be known more for the death of Caesar at the feet of its statue of Pompey than anything else. Octavian would assure this by paving it over and placing latrines on the site (Cass. Dio 47.19.1).

Republican to an Imperial Curia

The central nature of the senate house in Octavian’s visual program is suggested in Vitruvius’ preface to his *De Architectura* (pref. 2–3), wherein the author explains the impetus behind his presentation of ten books on the subject of architecture to the princeps in the 20s BC. In it, he recounts his recognition that the building program of the *princeps* used structures to communicate the power of Rome and to convey this message to posterity. Vitruvius’ treatise even provided suggestions for conjuring the ideals of symmetry, proportion, and harmony in urban architecture, and pointed to the role of the senate house along with other structures as architectural joiners within a forum:

13 Kuttner (1999) 357–8.

14 Joseph. *BJ* 1.156–57; Downey (1961) 106, 145.

15 Morselli (1989) 222.

The treasury, prison, and *curia* ('senate house') ought to unite the forum, but in such a manner that the size and proportions of them may be in harmony to those of the forum. Particularly the senate house should be made with special concern to the *dignitas* of the *municipium* or the *civitas*.¹⁶

Vitruvius believed that the senate house in particular should be indicative of the *dignitas* of a community. As imagined by Vitruvius and Augustus, among others, the size and grandeur of a building was capable of personifying Rome's overall *imperium*. The Curia Julia not only embodied Rome's power, but also provided an *exemplum* for other provincial cities to imitate spatially. Senate houses outside of Rome often similarly placed their *curia* to the right, upper corner when one faced the "presiding temple."¹⁷

The building represented more than a spatial connector. Simply looking at his *Res Gestae*, one is struck by the fact that the Curia Julia comes first in Augustus' own list of eighteen buildings he had constructed during his tenure, not to mention those he repaired (*RG* 19). The timing of the temple's consecration was crucial and the gesture symbolic: just two years after the battle of Actium, the *princeps* completed the senate house first planned by his adoptive father. The new *curia senatus* was fashioned to articulate a careful vernacular of authority and legitimacy. On the outside, on the roof, likely stood a statue of Victory with a wreath, on a globe, and the pediment bore the name of the emperor. In the senate house, the young ruler positioned another statue of Victory. Itself an early Hellenistic work originally from Tarentum, the statue was repurposed by Augustus as a patron deity, placed on a pillar above an altar, and adorned with Egyptian *spolia* (Suet. *Aug.* 35.3; Cass. Dio 51.2, 54.30.1; Hdn. 5.5.7, 7.11.3). Drenched in reminders of what happened to those who usurped power (i.e., Cleopatra and Mark Antony), it was at this altar that senators were obliged to offer incense and wine before a meeting. The ritual would reaffirm the connection of the senators with the gods, but also reminded the men of their relationship with the emperor. From her seminal position behind the

16 Vit. *De Arch.* 5.2.1: '*Aerarium, carcer, curia foro sunt coniungenda, sed ita uti magnitudo <ac> symmetriae eorum foro respondeant. maxime quidem curia in primis est facienda ad dignitatem municipii sive civitatis.*'

17 On the placement of provincial *curiae*, particularly in the west (e.g., Conimbriga, Saguntum), as imitative of the Curia Julia in respect to their placement within the forum, see MacMullen (2000) 60–1; Balty (1991) 116–18, 333.

seats of the consuls, Victory presided over the Curia Julia and most meetings of the senate.¹⁸

Monuments in and around the Curia had always had a distinctive significance. Valerius Maximus commented that senators wished to have a statue of Cato the Elder in the senate house, since the senator's service to the Republic as censor and overseer of the *ordo senatus* was so great that they felt he should be present at senatorial meetings (Val. Max. 8.15.2). However, statues could also convey regal connotations. Following his triumphs in the Second Punic War, Scipio Africanus recognized the intentions communicated by having statues of himself placed in certain spots within the city including the Curia, which he refused to accept (Livy 38.56.12, Val. Max. 4.1.6). True, Scipio's modesty won him points in the long run (and a few statues anyway), but curial representations in particular could articulate power and preeminence, as would the statue of Pompey in his Curia Pompeia, and later, the statue of Victory erected in the Curia Julia. Other adornments within the Curia Julia similarly galvanized the connection between the emperor and the senate. Augustus remarked in his *Res Gestae* that in 27 BC, a golden shield called the *clipeus virtutis* was set up in the Curia Julia with an inscription noting that the people and the senate had conferred it on him, and later notes that one of the inscriptions that advertised his title of *pater patriae* was placed in the new senate house (*RG* 34–35).¹⁹ This inscription was one in a set of three; a similar inscription was placed on the pediment of Augustus' house and on the triumphal chariot in his Forum. These inscriptions spoke in unison and, cooperatively, they communicated the bonds between the senate, the emperor, and Roman people. The inscription also served to conclude Augustus' *Res Gestae* itself.

The Roman Curia in Late Antiquity

Although the senate house seems to have been rebuilt by Domitian around AD 94 and detached from the Forum Julium, we have little information on his restoration efforts (*Chron. Min.* 1.146).²⁰ Certainly the building appears to have greatly needed repairs, and perhaps played strategically into the broader building program of the emperor. If the *Historia Augusta* can be believed, the Curia Julia remained a central focus of public life and a linchpin of activity within the city during the second and third centuries, due in part to the continued

18 See Zanker (1988) 80.

19 Rehak and Younger (2006) 138.

20 Anderson (1983) 101.

meetings of the senate within it.²¹ An overlooked event transpiring during the reign of Maximinus Thrax, implies that emperors continued to view the Curia Julia as a traditional focal point for expressing their newly-acquired *imperium*, even if the emperor himself was not present in Rome. The Greek historian Herodian noted that in the summer of 238, Thrax, the first soldier-emperor, took on the Germanic Alamans and kept the senate abreast of his valor and triumphs with regular dispatches (Hdn. 7.2.8). Not only did the emperor send announcements, he went one step further and ordered scenes from the battles be set up in front of the Curia, ostensibly “so that the Romans might not only hear about the battle but also be able to see what happened there” (Hdn. 7.8.2).²² It is significant that Herodian in fact lived and wrote in Rome during Maximinus’ reign, leading one to wonder whether the historian used his announcements and the painted scenes in front of the Curia Julia as a basis for his depiction of Maximinus in his *Histories*. Although these paintings and other honorific displays were destroyed later—perhaps immediately following the senate’s declaration of the emperor as a *hostis*—Maximinus Thrax exemplified the continued import of the senate house as a locus of authority and legitimacy, as well as a mediatory hub for the dissemination of information.²³

Parallels between the honors afforded Augustus in the senate house and those of later emperors continued into Late Antiquity. The historian Eutropius, himself a member of the later senatorial elite of the fourth century and always quick to demonstrate the graciousness of the body in addition to its interconnections with the emperor, reported that a golden shield was awarded to Claudius Gothicus by the senate during his brief reign; one that was perhaps highly reminiscent of Augustus’ senatorially conferred *clipeus virtutis* (Eutr. *Brev.* 9.11; Oros. *Hist. Advers. Pag.* 7.23.1). In terms of the senate house itself in the third century, just as the fire of Clodius had created a visual opportunity for Julius Caesar, an unfortunate fire in 283 under Carinus presented Diocletian and Maximian the chance at articulating their connection with the senate through the medium of the Curia Julia. What is striking is the apparent lack of emphasis on the project in the written sources. It is possible that this is itself a reflection of Diocletian’s rocky rapport with the senate. He notably did not validate his ascension to the purple by a reporting to Rome to have his *imperium*

21 Elagabalus met with the senate in the Curia Julia (*Hist. Aug. Elag.* 4.1–2).

22 Herodian 7.2.8 (trans. Echols). The Curia had been used to commemorate victories before, Millar (2002) 104.

23 Herodian’s comments support the material and numismatic evidence for Maximinus Thrax’s *damnatio memoriae* (*Hist. Aug. Max.* 23; 26). See Varner (2004) 200–202; Fig. 200a–c, 201–2.

ratified by the senate. The tetrarch in fact dated his reign to his acclamation by the troops in Nicomedia. Moreover, at this time the first public declarations that the capital of the Empire was anywhere the emperor resided appear. Penned around the year 291, the panegyricist who wrote the *Genethliacus of Maximian Augustus*, reports that senators went from Rome to Milan in order to visit Maximian, thus indicating to the writer that, “the seat of imperial power could then appear to be the place to which each emperor had come” (*Pan. Lat.* 11.12.2, trans. Nixon and Rodgers). Like many emperors in the third century, Diocletian looked more to the military as a legitimizing body than the senate, an Imperial turn reflected upon sadly by Aurelius Victor (*Aur. Vict. Caes.* 37).

Regardless of the lack of close ties with the senatorial aristocracy itself, Diocletian rebuilt Rome’s senate house on the foundations of the previous building, and undertook a broader building program within the city (*Chron. min.* 1.148). It is the Curia Diocletiana that was uncovered by Mussolini’s archaeologists in the early 1930s, and which survives today, in large part. Although some have interpreted the tetrarchic rebuilding of the senate house on its previous foundation as a display of “respectful conservatism”,²⁴ alternately, it may have been more an exhibit of perfunctory deference. The best visual articulation of Diocletian’s interplay with the senate comes from the ‘*Decennalia Base*’ of 303 that—as was regularized iconography at this point—depicts winged victories holding a shield on one side, a procession of senators on another, and the *genius* of the senate behind an emperor being crowned by Victory.²⁵ Despite the base, the tetrarch’s transformation of the state into a Dominate rather than a partnership with the senate became all too blatant when, in 303, Diocletian came to Rome to celebrate twenty years of rule. Lactantius reports that he cut his visit short due to the outspokenness of the Roman crowds, and chose to retire to Ravenna to celebrate his ninth consulate (*Lactant. De mort. pers.* 17). The rebuilding of the senate house can usually signal the relationship between senate and emperor to modern readers, but in the case of Diocletian, it does not appear that it was done with an intention of solidifying a strong working relationship.

Epigraphic evidence from the provinces also points to the fact that the building and rebuilding of senate houses was a significant act of renewal. An inscription from Belalis Maior in Africa Proconsularis dated to the reign of Constantine commemorates the rebuilding of the *curia* there.²⁶ Another,

24 Watkin (2009) 40.

25 It is possible but not definitive that the *genius senatus* is represented on the base of one of the columns erected by Diocletian in the Roman Forum in 303, L’Orange (1973) 139.

26 *CIL* VIII, 14436 = *ILS* 5518 (AD 326–333).

dated to the period between 379 and 383, commemorates the rebuilding of the *curia* of decurions in the Numidian city of Lambaesis and underscores how rebuilding a senate house could emphasize both a civic renaissance and the traditional mores of the benefactor.²⁷ The inscription commences with the description of the era under Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius as a golden one, under whom buildings were rebuilt and new ones were constructed. As part of this broader urban renewal, a former duumvir named Lucius Silicius Rufus paid to have the local *curia* and aqueducts restored, which had fallen into disrepair due, in part, to the notable '*incuria*' of previous generations. In the provinces, as in Rome, modifications to the *curia* of a city could often symbolize rebirth and recommitment, and in Late Antiquity, this continued in places such as North Africa, where civic institutions continued to flourish. In Rome, although Diocletian repaired the Curia, it was Constantine who would re-cultivate imperial amity with the body both visually and in actuality, connecting himself with the senate in coinage and enlarging its numbers to 2000.²⁸

Following Constantine, there was resurgence in the energy of the senatorial aristocracy at Rome and an increase in their autonomy in terms of membership and magistracies. At the end of Constantine's reign, the senate had gained the ability to adlect new men into its ranks, though the emperor would then ratify the adlections, and by 359, it was responsible for appointing the quaestorship and praetorship.²⁹ Additionally, despite the fact that the emperor was increasingly absent from Rome, the senate house continued to play a pivotal part in spatially mediating the ritual relationship between the senate and the emperor. Ammianus reports that in April of 357, Constantius II initially met with senators as part of a delegation outside the city, and then addressed senators in the Curia (Amm. Marc. 16.10.13). His trip to Rome was in many ways a pilgrimage, his descent into the Roman Forum itself highly emblematic and steeped in tradition. Ammianus Marcellinus reminds us that the welcome the emperor received in Rome thus fulfilled a *laetitia optata*, a 'longed-for pleasure' of Constantius' (Amm. Marc. 16.10.13). As Ammianus demonstrates, and Mark Humphries has so seminally pointed out, the senate continued to exert considerable effort in reestablishing active relations between itself and increasingly absent Augusti, often using monuments to articulate these bonds.³⁰ The

27 *CIL* VIII, 18328 = *ILS* 5520; Lepelley (1979) 420.

28 Coinage: *RIC* 7 Rome 272. Bleckmann (2006) 19. The senate would also laud him as '*liberator*' on the Arch of Constantine, erected in 315; see Salzman (2002) 34–36.

29 Salzman (2002) 34.

30 Humphries (2003).

actions and monuments decreed by the senate in the fourth century reveal that the senate still envisioned itself as a strong, solvent institution both capable of and necessary for legitimizing imperial rule. Yet the controversy surrounding the Altar of Victory in the later fourth century demonstrated how irrelevant the Senate's view had become to the emperor.

It is within the context of this resurgence in senatorial identity—and with the previous analysis of the import of the senate house in connecting imperial power with that of the senate in mind—that we can reevaluate the controversy surrounding the removal of the Altar of Victory from the Curia. In many ways, Constantius trod in the well-worn footsteps of his predecessors while visiting Rome, and articulated his legitimacy as many had done before him: *vis-à-vis* his interactions with the senate house and through monuments.³¹ Ambrose (*Ep.* 73.32) notes Constantius' removal of the statue of Victory from the senate house had the force of an imperial act; however, his motivations are unclear. The removal was perhaps an attempt to pacify Christian senators and outspoken laity (such as the Christian astrologer Firmicus Maternus) who viewed the burning of incense and the pouring of libations on the altar as an affront to Christian doctrine. Alternately, it may have been a lucid message to the senators that, just like God himself, Constantius had the right to give to the Curia, but could also take away. The issue of the statue was, in all likelihood, only of great concern to a select few elite Christians and non-Christians, and was not an attempt to cleanse the senate of paganism.³² In fact, Constantius appears to have quite appreciated the power of a conventional monumental testament to project legitimacy. The emperor simply chose a more popular venue than the senate house: the Circus Maximus. In the Circus, he placed a behemoth, 32.5 meter-high Egyptian obelisk complete with an inscribed proclamation of victory in verse on its base that cast the obelisk as a tropaeum.³³ The inscribed history of the obelisk connected Constantius with his beloved father, but also put forth Constantius as a victor in his own right.

The story of the Curia's Altar of Victory did not end with Constantius. It appears that the altar was put back after his death, only to be removed once again under Gratian in 382. Unlike Constantius, Gratian additionally halted subsidies to temples, confiscated lands belonging to the priestly colleges and

31 See Edbrooke (1976).

32 Cameron (2010) 56, 40. Symmachus notes that Constantius did not remove the *impensas* (subsidies) for Roman rituals (*Rel.* 3.7). See Liebeschuetz (2005).

33 *CIL* VI, 1163. Also note Amm. Marc. 16.10.17. See Henck (2001) 281–83; Humphries (2001) 61.

Roman temples, and cut off the tax exemptions given to certain priesthoods.³⁴ Although some clerics appear to have viewed the altar as a pagan symbol, the pagan senator Symmachus viewed it as more than just an instrument of traditional Roman religion; it was an umbilical cord that served as a physical mediator between the emperor and the senate. Since Augustus, it had visually marked the close ties held between the two entities. Its removal—likely by a Christian *praefectus urbi*—was illustrative of Gratian's lack of regard for the traditional Senatorial aristocracy. It was also collectively an affront to the increasingly autonomous sense acquired by the senate during the fourth century.

Although many have assaulted the ebbing prestige of the Late Antique senate, the Curia and the body itself continued to symbolize legitimacy, prestige, and traditional *Romanitas* into the fifth and early sixth century. Increasingly, it was the urban prefect or other elite families that appear to have taken on the expense of repairs to the Curia. Following the sacking of Rome in 410, it was likely restored in 412 by the urban prefect Neratius Palmatus, and later, the Secretarium was also restored.³⁵ The continued *dignitas* of the senate and the role of the urban prefect as civic patron became particularly apparent under the Ostrogoths. Just as the Roman senate was largely responsible for presenting the Scirian general Odoacer's rule as a legitimate and stabilizing solution, and passing it through Constantinople, so too Theodoric looked to the senate to endow him with a veneer of legitimacy.³⁶ Per usual, this was signified with a ceremonial visit to the Curia. In the year 500, which marked the seventh year of the reign of the Ostrogothic king over Italy, the ruler decided to visit Rome for 6 months. Pope Symmachus, senatorial families, and crowds of Romans greeted the arrival of the king upon his entrance into the city, where he first knelt to pray at St. Peter's, before entering into the Curia in the Roman Forum (Anon. Val. 65–66). Part of the ritual of legitimacy had become a pilgrimage to Rome's senate house.

34 Cameron (2011) 46, views the subsidies as a central point of contention in the Altar of Victory issue.

35 An inscription restored by Chastagnol (1962) 270, provides strong evidence for the reconstruction of the Curia. This inscription (*CIL* VI, 37128) reads: '...[IM] PERANT[IBUS?] ... / ... [N]ERATIVS IV[STVS?] ... / ... [C]URIAM SEN[ATUS] ...'. At the time when it was recovered, the inscription had been reused perhaps twice. Bartoli (1949–50) 79, seems to think (likely mistakenly) that it was from the original phase of building. For a picture, see Coates-Stephens (2002) 290, Fig. 5.

36 Marazzi (2007) 282.

Restorations of the senate house continued under Ostrogothic rule, but were increasingly the purview of the urban prefect. A letter written by Cassiodorus for Theodoric's successor-grandson, Athalaric, in 527 in fact confirms that the Curia was restored by the father of the aptly named urban prefect Reparatus (who was also the brother of Pope Vigilius):

The son of a high official naturally aspires to emulate his father's dignities. Your father had a distinguished career, first as Comes Largitionum, then as Praefectus Praetorio. While holding the latter office, he repaired the Senate House, restored to the poor the gifts(?) of which they had been deprived . . .³⁷

Although the political role of the senate in the sixth century was limited largely to Italy and the city of Rome, patronage of the Curia remained as a medium for senators to advertise the traditional Roman ideal of civic euergetism—just as it had in the Republic.

The Curia itself seems to have withstood the struggle over the city between the Gothic forces and Belisarius' Byzantine troops in 537–538, though it is only mentioned in regard to its proximity to the Temple of Janus, whose doors the Byzantine troops wished to prop open in the mode of Republican tradition (Procop. *Goth.* 5.25.19). Procopius' account of the siege in his *Gothic Wars* in fact focuses on the mythological and historical elements of the city—the Temple of Janus, the ship of Aeneas, the Sibylline books—rather than Christian monuments.³⁸ Procopius' account also illustrates the strength and prominence of the senatorial aristocracy within the city. Despite this textual and archaeological evidence to the contrary, however, scholars such as Richard Krautheimer have proclaimed that, "Rome by the early fifth century was a Christian city."³⁹ Rebutted convincingly as of late, this view must be abandoned.⁴⁰ The continued strength of the senate under Ostrogothic rule, the rebuilding of the Curia and other Roman buildings by administrators, and the continued focus on pre-Christian structures demonstrates that this was not the case; Roman

37 Cassiod. *Var.* 9.7.2. trans. Hodgkin: *'Dudum itaque illustris recordationis genitoris tui res publica sensit Romana diligentiam. comitivae siquidem largitionum praesidens, functus etiam vicibus praefectorum, praetorianam egit integerrime dignitatem, curiam reparans, pauperibus ablata restituens . . .'* See Kalas (1999) 260.

38 Ship of Aeneas (8.22.5–6), Sibylline Book (5.25.28); Cameron (1985) 203.

39 Krautheimer (1983) 94.

40 Humphries (2007) 21–23.

institutions still persisted, Christianity had not fully remade the city, and Constantinople had not completely eclipsed the dignified, long-lasting heritage of mother Roma, even if it was wealthier. Procopius claimed that Romans loved their city more than any other populace, and did attempt to preserve its buildings (Procop. *Goth.* 3.17.13; 4.22.5–6). The author notes that even Belisarius realized that to raze the city was to rob his predecessors of their memorial; in a letter to Totila, who had a history of razing cities, Belisarius entreated him to act as a preserver rather than destroyer of Rome (Procop. *Goth.* 3.22).

From Senate House to Church

The later sixth century saw the decline of the Roman senate and the encroachment of more foreign occupants: the Lombards. It appears that the last act of the Roman senate was to send an embassy to Constantinople to request aid from Tiberius II in 578. The request was denied. Although there is a report in the *Registrum Epistolarum* that on April 25, 603 the senate turned out, along with the clergy and Pope Gregory the Great, to greet the icons of Phocas and Leontia—it was far from the Curia and the Roman Forum—in the Lateran Palace (Greg. Mag. *Reg. App.* VIII).⁴¹ But the senate house was not abandoned. A column dedicated to Phocas was also erected in the Forum in front of the Curia—as Humphries suggests, in order to tap into an archaic *locus* of power.⁴² The Roman senate had indeed lapsed under the pressure of “barbarians” and the crumbling of the Western Empire, but senatorial families still had a degree of sway within the city. Pope Honorius was himself from a senatorial family and appears to have identified strongly with his lineage; his father was remembered as one of the final consuls in the West. It was he who, around 630, transformed the Curia with minimal alterations into S. Adriano (*Liber Pontificalis* 72.6, ed. Davis). He notably kept the senatorial benches intact. As Gregor Kalas points out, this transformation was to usher the papacy into the Roman Forum while still “maintaining the location’s political valence.”⁴³ By all accounts, the transition from Curia to church was a smooth one. Visually, the Curia still retained much of its familiar aesthetics, with a raised sanctuary area added and an apse.

41 For translation, see Martyn (2004) 886.

42 Humphries (2007) 57.

43 Kalas (1999) 263.

Conclusion

During the early Middle Ages, many monumental buildings within the city of Rome were transformed into *diaconiae*—buildings used for public welfare, particularly to feed pilgrims—with few modifications made to their ‘pagan’ ornamentation.⁴⁴ In regard to the Curia, which became a *diaconia* in the mid-eighth century, early medieval liturgies still utilized the centrality of the structure within the Forum area.⁴⁵ However, the Forum Romanum increasingly declined in the Renaissance. Nicholas V used it as a kind of quarry that stripped many buildings of their stone and ornament, though S. Adriano did remain intact. Into the early modern period, the church underwent renovations in 1589 and 1653–1656.⁴⁶ It is perhaps evidence of the transformation of the Curia into a relic within a kind of curial cult itself that in the seventeenth century the bronze doors that dated to the reign of Diocletian were removed from S. Adriano in order to provide the central nave’s door at San Giovanni in Laterano. Even in the Christian period, patronage and control over the Curia represented triumph.

Despite its earlier fame, the former identity of S. Adriano as the Roman Senate House appears to have been largely forgotten. When archaeologists in the mid 19th century uncovered its early origins, it sparked new interest in the area in and around the church. In 1922, the Italian government finally purchased the Curia for £16,000, just a few months before Benito Mussolini became Prime Minister.⁴⁷ It is with the structure’s storied connection to legitimate rule and victory in mind that we can now return to the dictator’s fervent rebuilding of the Curia Julia and likewise reinterpret a letter from the Bishop of Luni to the Ministry of National Education in 1933. In it, the bishop pleaded against the restoration of the Curia and its deconsecrating as a church. It was his belief that the church of S. Adriano was itself a symbol of Christian victory over paganism.⁴⁸ Yet clearly, as we have seen, Mussolini was merely the last in a long line of “victors” who used the Curia to communicate their own message. The Curia was a relic that harbored the glory of Rome that Mussolini sought to uncover, harness, and reinterpret in the Forum excavations in the 1930s. While the site at various times appears to have lain dormant, its significance was intrinsic; its import could be reactivated. Just as the senatorial body acted as a

44 Niederer (1953) 3–6.

45 Goodson (2010) 76; *CBCR* 1, 1.

46 *CBCR* 1, 1.

47 “Roman Senate House Sold,” *NYT* (July 11, 1922); Watkin (2009) 118–19.

48 Baxa (2010) 131.

Republican “focus of mediation” between the gods and the people, the senate house itself served as a locus of power that mediated relations between various institutions.⁴⁹ Most importantly, the Curia bestowed a tool for advertising legitimacy upon those who wished to restore her.⁵⁰

References

- Anderson, J.C. (1983) “A Topographical Tradition in Fourth Century Chronicles: Domitian’s Building Program,” *Historia* 32.1: 93–105.
- Balty, J.C. (1991) *Curia ordinis: recherches d’architecture et d’urbanisme antiques sur les curies provinciales du monde romain*. Bruxelles.
- Barnes, T.D. (1981) *Constantine and Eusebius*. Cambridge.
- Barnish, S.J.B. and Marazzi, F. (eds) (2007) *The Ostrogoths: From the Migration Period to the Sixth Century*. Woodbridge, UK.
- Bartoli, A. (1959–60) “Lavori nella sede del Senato romano al tempo di Teodorico.” *BCAR* 73: 77–78.
- (1963) *Curia Senatus. Lo scavo e il restauro: Iscrizioni dipinte e graffite della chiesa di S. Adriano nell’edificio della Curia*. Rome.
- Bassett, S. (2004) *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople*. Cambridge.
- Baxa, P. (2010) *Roads and Ruins: The Symbolic Landscape of Fascist Rome*. Toronto.
- Beard, M. (1990) “Priesthood in the Roman Republic,” in Beard and North (1990) 19–48.
- Beard, M. and North, J. (eds) (1990) *Pagan Priests, Religion and Power in the Ancient World*. Ithaca.
- Bleckmann, B. (2006) “Sources for the History of Constantine,” in Lenski (2006) 14–31.
- Blum, O.J. (tr) (1998) *Peter Damian: Letters 91–120*. Fathers of the Church Mediaeval Continuation, 5. District of Columbia.
- Cameron, A. (2011) *The Last Pagans of Rome*. Oxford.
- (1985) *Procopius and the Sixth Century*. Berkeley.
- Chastagnol, A. (1962) *Les Fastes de la Préfecture de Rome au Bas-Empire*. Paris.
- Coarelli, F. (1985) *Il foro Romano*. Rome.
- Coates-Stephens, R. (2002) “Epigraphy as Spolia—The Reuse of Inscriptions in Early Medieval Buildings,” *PBSR* 70: 275–96.
- Cooper, K. and Hillner, J. (eds) (2009) *Religion, Dynasty and Patronage in Early Christian Rome: 300–900*. Cambridge.

49 Beard (1990) 33.

50 Many thanks must be given to the American Academy in Rome for the use of their splendid library and photo archive, and to Mark Humphries for his patience and aid in helping with this contribution. All mistakes are my own.

- Davis, R. (tr.) ([1989] 2000) *The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis)*. Liverpool.
- Deroux, C. (ed.) (1998) *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History*, vol. 9. Brussels.
- Downey, G. (1961) *A History of Antioch in Syria: From Seleucus to the Arab Conquest*. Princeton.
- Duret, L. and J.-P. Néraudau (1983) *Urbanisme et métamorphoses de la Rome antique*. Paris.
- Echols, E.C. (tr.) (1961) *Herodian of Antioch's History of the Roman Empire*. Berkeley.
- Ewald, B.C. and Noreña, C.F. (eds) (2010) *The Emperor and Rome: Space, Representation, and Ritual*. Cambridge.
- Flower, H. (2010) *Roman Republics*. Princeton.
- Gabba, E. (1997) *Il Senato nella storia. 1. Il senato nell'età romana*. Roma.
- Gibbon, E. (abridg. 2003) *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. New York.
- Gisborne, M. (2005) "A Curia of Kings: Sulla and Royal Imagery," in Hekster and Fowler (2005) 105–24.
- Goodson, C.J. (2010) *The Rome of Pope Paschal I: Papal Power, Urban Renovation, Church Rebuilding and Relic Translation, 817–824*. Cambridge.
- Graham, M.W. (2006) *News and Frontier Consciousness in the Late Roman Empire*. Ann Arbor.
- Grant, M. (1970) *The Roman Forum*. London.
- Hekster, O. and Fowler, R. (eds) (2005) *Imaginary Kings: Royal Images in the Ancient Near East, Greece and Rome*. Stuttgart.
- Humphries, M. (2001) "Constantine, Christianity, and Rome," *Hermathena* 171: 47–63.
- (2003) "Roman Senators and Absent Emperors in Late Antiquity," *AAAH*, 17: 27–46.
- (2007) "From Emperor to Pope? Ceremonial, Space, and Authority at Rome from Constantine to Gregory the Great," in Cooper and Hillner (2007) 21–58.
- Kalas, G.A. (1999) "Sacred Image, Urban Space: Image, Installations, and Ritual in the Early Medieval Roman forum," dissertation, Bryn Mawr College.
- (1983) *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics*. Berkeley.
- Kuttner, A. (1999) "Culture and History at Pompey's Museum," *TAPhA* 129: 343–73.
- Lanciani, R. (1883) *L'aula e gli uffici del senato romano. (Curia hostilia iulia: Secretarium senatus)*. Memorie 3.11. Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche. Rome.
- Lenski, N. (ed.) (2006) *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*. Cambridge.
- Lepelley, C. (1979) *Les Cites de l'Afrique romaine au Bas-Empire I–II*. Paris.
- Liebeschuetz, J.H.W.G. (2005) *Ambrose of Milan: Political Letters and Speeches*. Liverpool.
- MacMullen, R. (2000) *Romanization in the Time of Augustus*. New Haven, RI.
- Mancini, A. (1967–8) "La chiesa medioevale di S. Adriano nel foro romano," *RPAA*, 40: 191–245.

- Marazzi, F. (2007) "The Last Rome: From the End of the Fifth Century to the End of the Sixth Century," in *The Ostrogoths: From the Migration Period to the Sixth Century*, Barnish and Marazzi: 279–302. Woodbridge.
- Millar, F. (2002) "Political Power in Mid-Republican Rome: Curia or Comitium," in Millar (2002) 85–108.
- (2002) *Rome, the Greek World, and the East*, vol. 1, *The Roman Republic and the Augustan Revolution*. ed. by H. Cotton and G. Rogers. Chapel Hill.
- Mommsen, T. (1864) "De comitio Romano curiis lanique temple," *Bullettino dell' Instituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica* 16: 288–318.
- Morselli, C. and E. Tortorici (1989) *Curia, Forum Iulium, Forum Transitorium*. Rome.
- Niederer, F.J. (1953) "Pagan Monuments Converted to Christian Use: The Roman 'Diaconiae,'" *JSAH* 12.3: 3–6.
- Nixon, C.E.V. and Rodgers, B.S. (1994) *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini*. Berkeley.
- Noble, T.X.F. (2001) "The Making of a Papal Rome," Theuws, de Jong, and Rhijn (2001) 45–91.
- L'Orange, H.P. (1973) *Likeness and Icon: Selected Studies in Classical and Early Medieval Art*. Odense.
- Packer, J.E. (2010) "Pompey's Theater and Tiberius' Temple of Concord: A Late Republican Primer for an Early Imperial Patron," in Ewald and Noreña (2010) 135–68.
- Ramage, E.S. (1991) "Sulla's Propaganda," *Klio* 73: 93–121.
- Reber, F. von (1858) *Die Lage der Curia Hostilia und der Curia Julia*. Munich.
- Rees, R. (1993) "Images and Image: A Re-Examination of Tetrarchic Iconography," *G&R* 40.2: 181–200.
- Rehak, P. and Younger, J.G. (eds) (2006), *Imperium and Cosmos: Augustus and the Northern Campus Martius*. Madison.
- Richardson, L. (1992) *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*. Baltimore.
- Roller, D.W. (1998) *The Building Program of Herod the Great*. Berkeley.
- (2007) "The Lost Building Program of Marcus Antonius," *AC* 76: 89–98.
- Salzman, M.R. (2002) *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy: Social and Religious Change in the Western Roman Empire*. Cambridge.
- Simpson, C.J. (1998) "The Curia Iulia and the Ara Victoriae: A 'Politico-Religious' Imperative in August 29 B.C.," in Deroux (1998) 225–30.
- Talbert, R. (1984) *The Senate of Imperial Rome*. Princeton.
- Theuws, F., de Jong, M. and Rhijn, C. van (eds) (2001) in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*. Leiden.
- Thompson, D.L. (1981) "The Meetings of the Roman Senate on the Palatine," *AJA* 85.3: 335–39.

- Várhelyi, Z. (2010) *The Religion of Senators in the Roman Empire: Power and the Beyond*. Cambridge.
- Varner, E. (2004) *Mutilation and Transformation: Damnatio Memoriae and Roman Imperial Portraiture*. Leiden.
- Watkin, D. (2009) *The Roman Forum*. Cambridge, MA.
- Weigel, R. (1992) *Lepidus: The Tarnished Triumvir*. London.
- Zanker, P. (1988) *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*. Ann Arbor.